

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9313

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, IR

SUBJ: PRESS COVERAGE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN MIDDLE EAST

1. FARSI PAPERS HAVE RECENTLY GIVEN RATHER MISLEADING
COVERAGE TO STATEMENTS BY MIDDLE EAST LEADERS CONCERNING
THEIR COUNTRIES' NUCLEAR POLICIES. DECEMBER 3 AP WIRE
SERVICE REPORT ON ISRAELI PRESIDENT KATZIR'S COMMENTS
RE ISRAELI NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT APPEARED IN NEDAY IRAN
NOVIN (ORGAN OF RULING PARTY) UNDER HEADLINE QTE
PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL SAYS ISRAEL ABLE TO PRODUCE ATOMIC
WEAPONS, AND IF NEEDED, IN THE FIFTH FIGHT WITH ARABS
ISRAEL WILL HAVE A NUCLEAR WAR UNQTE. STORY ITSELF
INCLUDED ONLY AP COPY, OFFERED WITHOUT COMMENT.
DECEMBER 4 ETTELA'AT CARRIED BANNER HEADLINE QTE EGYPT WILL
MAKE ATOMIC BOMB:
AFTER ISRAEL'S THREAT THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON
SAID EGYPT TOO WILL MAKE ATOMIC WEAPONS UNQTE. ARTICLE
ITSELF WAS MUCH MORE SUBDUED, BUT OBSERVED THAT QTE SUBJECT
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OF ATOMIC WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS A TOPIC ALL OVER THE

WORLD UNQTE.

2. STORY IN ETTELA'AT ON DECEMBER 3 COVERED INTERVIEW WITH UNNAMED CORRESPONDENT AND PAK PRESIDENT HEADLINED QTE BHUTTO SAID IF U.S. DOES NOT GIVE CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS TO PAKISTAN, PAKISTAN WILL PRODUCE ATOMIC BOMB UNQTE. ARTICLE DEALT WITH BHUTTO'S NERVOUSNESS OVER INDIA'S MILITARY POWER, INCLUDING NUCLEAR CAPABILITY.

3. STORIES ON SAME SUBJECTS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS WERE MUCH LESS DRAMATIC. FARSI PRESS HEADLINES ARE OFTEN EXAGGERATED AND MISLEADING, APPARENTLY IN ORDER TO STIMULATE NEWSSTAND SALES. ALTHOUGH IN THIS SENSE HEADLINES ARE NOT UNUSUAL, THEY MAY ALSO BE DESIGNED TO PUT EVEN MORE FAVORABLE LIGHT ON SHAH'S PROPOSAL FOR MIDDLE EAST NUCLEAR FREE ZONE AND TO GIVE IMPLICIT SUPPORT FOR GOI'S MILITARY BUILDUP.
HELMS

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